



General syllabus
for third cycle/Doctoral education
effective as of April 2025



NABA Doctoral School

The **NABA Doctoral School**, based in Milan, oversees and manages all activities related to its doctoral programmes. The school is coordinated by **Vincenzo Estremo** (PhD Course Leader) and comprises the following tracks:

- **PhD in Artistic Practice**, in collaboration with HDK–Valand Academy of Art and Design at the University of Gothenburg;
- **MUR-accredited Doctorate in Artistic Practices and Project Culture**;
- **National Interest Doctorate (DIN)** led by ABANA Naples;

The Doctoral School aims to develop critical skills and to train artists, designers, curators, scholars, and producers who are able to undertake research and creative production through innovative methodological approaches. These approaches prioritize critical epistemologies, empirical research tools, and intersectional perspectives, without neglecting political and activist theories and actions. The School provides the practical-theoretical preparation necessary to work within the fields of artistic practice and design, bringing together related approaches in practical cultures and project work—ranging across different methods of research and analysis, scales, and domains. Its framework intersects politics, environmental issues, class, ethnic belonging, gender, and sexuality, employing multifactorial models to address effectively the challenges and transformations of complex societies.

Promoting an explicitly interdisciplinary approach, the programme's research focus includes, in particular:

- **Visual and performing arts**
- **Curatorial and archival practices**
- **Film production**
- **Critical media and creative technologies**
- **Fashion design**
- **Social and environmental design**
- **Urban design**
- **Visual culture and imagery, including its applications in communication.**



PhD in Artistic Practice

The **PhD in Artistic Practice** is an English-taught doctoral programme resulting from a collaboration agreement between NABA and HDK-Valand, where NABA acts as the Teaching Institution and HDK-Valand is the awarding institution. The 240-credit programme combines research courses in both creative and theoretical fields.

Programme Structure

- **Coursework:** 60 credits
- **Doctoral Thesis:** 180 credits

Programme Components

Courses and Seminars

Doctoral students must complete 60 credits of structured coursework, including both mandatory and elective courses. Core courses are held at HDK-Valand, while additional seminars and public activities are hosted at NABA (Milan). The curriculum covers a range of topics supporting artistic research, critical theory, and professional development.

- **Duration:** 4 years full-time, up to 8 years part-time
- **Scholarship:** €26,000 gross annually (subject to availability)
- **Eligibility:** Open to students with a work permit in Italy
- **Status:** PhD candidates are employed as “Co.Co.Co.” (Coordinated and Continuous Collaboration) workers in Italy and enrolled as students in Sweden
- **Joint Selection Committee:** NABA + HDK-Valand
- **Supervision:** Primary supervisors from HDK-Valand; co-supervisors from NABA faculty
- **Regulations:** PhD candidates follow HDK-Valand regulations, with mandatory online seminars and one in-person Key Stage Seminar per year
- **Teaching Commitment:** PhD students are required to engage in teaching activities at NABA

COURSES (60 ECTS)

- **30 ECTS** = 4 Core Courses (7.5 credits each)
- **30 ECTS** = Elective courses or seminars, taken at NABA or other institutions

Core Courses

- Core Course 1: Research Writing
- Core Course 2: Research Methods and Design
- Ethnography for Creative Practice
- Researching the Imaginary



Electives

Courses (HDK)

- Elective Course 1: Ethnography for Creative Professionals
- Elective Course 2: Researching the Imaginary

Seminars (NABA)

- Seminar 1 (3 ECTS) – 1st Semester
- Seminar 2 (3 ECTS) – 1st Semester
- Seminar 3 (3 ECTS) – 2nd Semester
- Seminar 4 (3 ECTS) – 2nd Semester
- Seminar 5 (3 ECTS) – 1st Semester

Each 3-credit seminar at NABA is theme-based and features guest lecturers and international keynote speakers. Topics change annually.

Key Stage Seminars (%seminars)

Four milestone meetings held during the PhD track, either online or in person. Each seminar has a specific agenda aligned with the doctoral progression:

- **25% milestone** – open
- **50% milestone** – open
- **80% milestone** – may be open or closed
- **Final seminar** – closed

Teaching Activities (NABA)

Since the PhD in Artistic Practice is not formally recognized in the Italian university system, NABA collaborates with HDK to run the doctoral programme. To ensure adequate financial support, NABA hires PhD candidates with a renewable annual “Co.Co.Co.” contract.

Teaching workload (per year):

- 4 years: 100 hours/year
- 5 years: 87 hours/year
- 6 years: 75 hours/year
- 7 years: 62 hours/year
- 8 years: 50 hours/year